

Safe <sup>LEARNING</sup> active engaged Character <sup>confidence</sup> Children and youth

# ENRICH After-School

Evaluating the Out-of-School Time Needs, Resources & Initiatives in the Communities of Houston



After-school and out-of-school time programs are a critical component of youth education and development in Houston/Harris County. Youth that participate in after-school/out-of-school time activities are more prepared for success in school and life and less likely to commit or become a victim of crime.<sup>1, 2, 3</sup>

## ENRICH After-School

(Evaluating the Out-of-School Time Needs, Resources and Initiatives in the Communities of Houston) is a regional effort, led by City of Houston Council Member, Vice Mayor Pro Tem, C.O. “Brad” Bradford, a 24 year veteran Houston Police Officer who also served as Houston’s Police Chief for seven years, Houston Endowment, Inc. and the Cooperative for After-School Enrichment (CASE). Each stakeholder is invested in advancing the research needed to reengineer our after-school systems to ensure sustainability and access for all youth, especially youth without economic means.

Local after-school providers and supporters have observed improved participant outcomes and significant community returns from strategic investments in after-school/out-of-school time programming. However, these significant returns,

such as improved youth development and reduction in risky and criminal behaviors, which impact our region, are not yet fully understood.

ENRICH After-School is on the cusp of changing the way Houston/Harris County perceives after-school/out-of-school time programming. Our vision is to develop a community of engaging after-school programs

that positively impact Houston area students and their families.

**What we are doing**—over the last six months, leadership from over 50 youth serving organizations and key stakeholders worked with ENRICH After-School to:

- Document federal, state, local and private funding for after-school/out-of-school time
- Construct our region’s first ever out-of-school time logic model and research questions to assess perceptions and crime trends

**“After-school programs are effective crime prevention strategies. We must find a way to give youth a sense of productivity from 3-6 pm, a time when most are unsupervised and in need of proper guidance, coaching and counseling.”<sup>4</sup>**



Harris County elementary youth reflection on their favorite aspect of their after-school program.

**What we are learning**—in collaboration with over 75 experienced professionals that work with youth or deliver after-school/out-of-school time programming, ENRICH After-School found that:

- Providers believe that programming positively impacts youth, especially academic achievement and social-emotional stability
- Quality programming consists of project-based academic learning that connects to the school day, social-emotional support, fitness, college/career readiness and family learning
- Most funding (70%) is time limited from federal sources and certain funds restrict participation or limit participation after age 12, a critical time during youth development

**What is next**—after-school/out-of-school time programs are significantly dependant on time limited public funds. Usually, when these funds go away, programs go away. Program closures, which increase every year and affect thousands of youth, especially those without economic means, is our greatest out-of-school time challenge. To fight program loss, ENRICH After-School commits to:

- Documenting, through collaborative research studies, the current state of after-school
- Increasing awareness and expressing the need for programs in neighborhoods where there are closures or no services

ENRICH After-School believes that true program impact comes from consistent and engaging programming that equips youth with the skills to achieve lifelong success. For this to happen, we—city, county, schools, corporate and private funders, providers and families—must invest in after-school. If we unite to save programs that are closing every year, increase quality programs in neighborhoods with the most need and maintain programming through the summer months we will succeed in better preparing our youth for their future. The road our youth may take depends on what happens after school from 3-6 pm. Let's give youth the opportunities to take the right road.



**What you can do**—ENRICH After-School is counting the number of Houstonians who care about after-school to strengthen our message to local politicians and key stakeholders. Our goal is to secure 5,000 pledges over the next year. Go to [afterschoolzone.org](http://afterschoolzone.org) and join Houston's after-school movement. Every pledge helps ENRICH After-School better understand the impact our community would like to achieve through the implementation of out-of-school time services.

<sup>1</sup> Afterschool Alliance. 2007. "Afterschool Programs: Keeping Kids — and Communities — Safe."

<sup>2</sup> Afterschool Alliance. 2009. "Afterschool and Workforce Development: Helping Kids Compete."

<sup>3</sup> Afterschool Alliance. 2012. "Afterschool: An Ally in Promoting Middle School Improvement."

<sup>4</sup> City of Houston Council Member, Vice Mayor Pro Tem, C.O. "Brad" Bradford, a 24 year veteran Houston Police Officer who also served as Houston's Police Chief for seven years.